A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the

DEATH

OF THE

Revd. Mr. William Bentley,

Who departed this Life, *May* 1.
In the *Fifty-ſecond* Year of his Age;

PREACHED in *Criſpin-ſtreet, Spital-Fields, May* 12, 1751.

By *JOHN ROGERS.*

Publiſhed at the unanimous requeſt of the Church.

To which are added,

THREE LETTERS

From the Reverend Mr. BENTLEY,
while at *Bath.*

The SECOND EDITION.

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TO

The CHURCH of CHRIST,

Meeting in *Criſpin-ſtreet, Spital-Fields.*

Brethren and Friends,

IT is through your importunity I now make this publick appearance. Printing has ever been my averſion; and could I, with any decency to the memory of your late Paſtor, or to your requeſt, decline it, I would have gladly done it. I have not the vanity to imagine, that any thing of mine is worthy to ſee the light: I am ſenſible I have hereby expoſed my name and character to the world; but this is nothing, if the honour of God and religion ſuffer not. I muſt take the liberty, in juſtice to the truth, myſelf, and you, to declare, that the truth in the following Sermon is the Lord's;

Lord's; and if any error is in it, it is mine; the publication of both lies at your door. I know God can get to himself honour, and convey to his people comfort and advantage, by what means he pleaſes; and if this publication, mean as it is, contributes to this end, I ſhall little regard the ſcorn of the erroneous, the ſneer of the prophane, the cenſure of the critick, or the ſnarl of *Momus*; each of which will find whereon to exerciſe his talent. Such as this plain Diſcourſe is, I commend it, and you with it, to the divine bleſſing; and am,

Yours for CHRIST's *ſake*,

JOHN ROGERS.

[redacted]

PSALM, lxxi. 23, 24.

My lips ſhall greatly rejoice when I ſing unto thee: And my ſoul which thou haſt redeemed. My tongue alſo ſhall talk of thy righteouſneſs all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought unto ſhame, that ſeek my hurt.

I Need not tell this crowded aſſembly, what the awful providence is that brings us together at this time; the very great ſorrow that ſwells in many of your breaſts, the briny tears that trickle down your cheeks, the gloom that viſibly ſits on your brows, and the enſigns of mourning which hang around this place, all unite to apprize you that this church has loſt its worthy and honour'd paſtor, and the world an excellent and uſeful goſpel-miniſter. It is by the unanimous requeſt of

you, the members of this church of Chriſt, that I am called to improve amongſt you this grievous and trying diſpenſation at this time; glad ſhould I have been, had the province been allotted to an abler hand, ſince I fear, leſt both the ſubject and your juſt expectations ſhould ſuffer, through the unfitneſs of the inſtrument you have preſſed into this ſervice: however, this I know, that God can, if he pleaſes, *out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings perfect praiſe.*

It is thought by ſome, * that this, as well as the preceding *Pſalm*, were wrote by *David* on *Abſalom*'s rebellion and defeat; this they gather from the 9th *ver.* of this *Pſalm*, where the pſalmiſt prays, that God would not caſt *him off in the time of old age, nor forſake him when his ſtrength faileth:* as likewiſe at the 18th *ver. Now alſo when I am old and grey headed, O God, forſake me not*, &c. for when he was hunted by *Saul*, as a partridge upon the mountains, he was in his youth. It is allow'd by all orthodox divines that I have met with, that *David* was a type of Chriſt, both in his perſon, offices, ſufferings, and ſalvation; his numerous foes, both in their combinations, aſſault, and defeat, were myſtical, and were ſhadows of the conflict, victor

* *Vid.* Poli Synopſ. Critic.

tory and triumph of Chriſt in his perſon, and members, over ſpiritual enemies. It is very clear to a ſpiritual obſerver, that the ſpirit of inſpiration, under whoſe influence he wrote, carried his view of things forward unto goſpel-times. Chriſt ever was the foundation and conſolation of the church; to him the faithful in all ages *looked for redemption in* Iſrael; *Abraham rejoiced to ſee* his *day, and he ſaw it and was glad, John* viii. 56. Yea, it is evident beyond all reaſonable contradiction, that multitudes of paſſages in the *Pſalms* point directly to the *Meſſiah*, and are expreſſly applied to him in the new teſtament, and can in no tolerable ſenſe belong to literal *David*; inſtances of this ſort might eaſily be produced, were there time or occaſion for it. That *David* was no ſtranger to the perſon, offices, and work of the *Meſſiah* (who was to come *in the end of the world, to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf)* as the foundation of his own hope and comfort, I preſume is not denied by any here preſent. That he ſpeaks of him as God and man in one perſon for ever, as *David*'s lord, and yet *David*'s ſon; that he is a prieſt after the order of *Melchizedeck*, in the 110th Pſalm; as a king on God's holy hill of *Sion*, in the

2d Pſalm; that he foretels of his ſufferings, in the 22d and 69th Pſalms, and elſewhere; and the aſſumption of our nature, and his chearful ingagement in the great work of ſalvation, in the 40th Pſalm; his death and reſurrection, in the 16th; and his triumphant aſcenſion to heaven, together with the gifts he received as mediator, and the beſtowment of them on his people in the 68th Pſalm, and ſeveral others. *David*'s faith in forgiving grace through the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, is expreſs'd in *Pſalm* xxxii. otherwiſe, the inſpired apoſtle, *Rom.* iv. 6. gives us a miſtaken interpretation of that paſſage, ſaying, *Bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteouſneſs without works.* But I preſume it is not doubted of amongſt you, that Chriſt was the foundation of *David*'s faith, hope, and conſolation; that he was the great prophet, prieſt, and king of the church, under the old teſtament diſpenſation, as well as the new; that the ſaints then were acquainted with redeeming, juſtifying, and ſaving grace, as new covenant bleſſings, through Chriſt the head of it, as dark as their types, ſhadows, and propheſies were: theſe truths you have often heard ſweetly and clearly open'd from this pulpit,

and

and I truſt you are eſtabliſh'd in the faith of: 'tis, doubtleſs, of Chriſt, who is the Lord our righteouſneſs and ſtrength, the pſalmiſt ſpeaks in the 16th *ver.* of this Pſalm, wherein my text is; *I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God*, in the *Heb.* it is אדני יהוה *the Lord Jehovah*, pointing to Chriſt, both in his office-character, and divine nature; *I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only.* In the ſame ſtrain I take the words of our text; *My lips ſhall greatly rejoice when I ſing unto thee, and my ſoul, which thou haſt redeemed. My tongue alſo ſhall talk of thy righteouſneſs all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought unto ſhame that ſeek my hurt.* For what can open the lips in praiſe, and enlarge the ſoul in triumph like redeeming grace? What ſo worthy of meditation and diſcourſe all the day long as a juſtifying righteouſneſs? By both which the ſpiritual enemies of the ſoul are for ever confounded and brought unto ſhame that ſeek his hurt. In this evangelical light did your late worthy paſtor, and my very honour'd brother, view the words of my text, as you will ſoon be convinced, when I read you the following lines, wrote with his own hand a day or two

before

before his death; * "I have for ſeveral "years had a mind for that word at my "funeral, and am of the ſame mind ſtill, "*Pſalm* lxxi. 23, 24. The comforts I have "had from them, of redeeming grace, the "perfection of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and "the deſtruction of all my ſpiritual enemies, "my ſoul ſhall have an eternity to praiſe "him for". Since then the ſpirit of God, who is the beſt interpreter of his own word, did thus open and ſeal theſe words on the heart of the deceaſed, whoſe ſoul has now begun an eternity to praiſe him for it, and ſince he left them with this view for your edification at his funeral; I hope I ſhall be ſufficiently juſtified if I take them in this light alſo. In my text then you have the *three* grand parts of our ſalvation; redemption, juſtification and victory; each and all of theſe demand the meditation of our hearts, the *rejoicing* of our *lips*, the *ſong* of our *ſouls*, and the diſcourſe of our *tongues*, not only *all the day long* on earth, but all the days of eternity in heaven. Permit me, then, my brethren and friends, to take the plan of my diſcourſe from the pen of your late paſtor, and bear with me while I briefly open theſe *four* things. *Firſt*,

* Here I read the paper dated the *Monday* Night, he died the *Wedneſday* following.

First, The glories of redeeming grace.

Secondly, The perfection of Chriſt's righteouſneſs.

Thirdly, The influence theſe have in the deſtruction of our ſpiritual enemies. And,

Fourthly, The triumphs of the ſoul, in which the members of the body bear a part in the delightful work on this account.

First, Let our *lips* now *talk*, and our hearts meditate a little on the glories of redeeming grace. This is a ſubject that well deſerves our ſerious attention, ſince it has ſo immediate and intereſting a concern in our everlaſting ſalvation. Redemption ſuppoſes captivity and bondage; to redeem and deliver from which, either price, or power, or both are abſolutely neceſſary. The fall and apoſtaſy of our natures in the firſt *Adam*, rendered the whole world guilty before God, obnoxious to the curſe and condemnation of the righteous and holy law, ſlaves to Satan, and in bondage under ſin, and ſo loſt and miſerable in themſelves for ever. Free and diſtinguiſhing love, pitched on a choſen ſeed from everlaſting; the purpoſes of the divine will were to *bring many ſons* and daughters *to glory*; the entrance of ſin ſeemed an effectual

fectual bar to hinder their getting thither; but the covenant of grace made between the glorious Three, Father, Son, and Spirit *ordered in all things, and ſure*, had effectually provided for the removal of this difficulty. The elect were choſen in Chriſt as their head, ſurety, mediator, and redeemer; *According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world*, &c. *Epheſ.* i. 4. to Chriſt they were committed as his care and charge; their ſins were laid upon him; their debts demanded of him; their ſalvation ſecured by him; the faith of the ſaints in all ages was directed to him; the ſacrifices and types were ſhadows of him; the prophets preached him; the blood of beaſts repreſented him; the *cherubim* of glory, ark of the covenant, mercy-ſeat, and the like, of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly, had covenant-myſteries couched under them. And *in the fulneſs of time God ſent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of ſons*, Gal. iv. 4, 5. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us*, Gal. iii. 13. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſent his*

own

ofim ſon in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh, &c. Rom. viii. 3, 4. What could not the law do? Why, it could not juſtify and ſave a ſinner; it is become weak, and unable to anſwer this great end through our fleſh, through our tranſgreſſion and apoſtaſy; it can condemn, but it cannot juſtify one that has broken it. Divines uſually ſpeak of redemption as two-fold, by price and by power, both are neceſſary for the ſalvation of God's elect; the covenant made proviſion for both.

1ſt, The blood of Chriſt is the price of redemption. *We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold — but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. The Lord *laid help upon one that is mighty*, Pſalm, lxxxix. 19. *I have made a covenant with my choſen*, ſays the father, *I have ſworn unto* David *my ſervant*, Pſalm, lxxxix. 3. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto* David, ver. 35. This glorious prieſt was made with an oath, called *the word of the oath*, Heb. vii. 28. *I have found a ranſom*, ſays Jehovah the father, and therefore the elect are *delivered from going down to the Pit*, Job xxxiii. 24. The ſon of man gave

his life a ranſom for many, Matt. xx. 28. The church is ſaid to be *purchas'd with the blood of God*, Acts xx. 28. The divine nature deriving an infinite dignity upon the human ſacrifice. Sin is of an infinite nature, objectively conſidered, as it is committed againſt an infinite God; none but an infinite perſon could make ſatisfaction: *without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion*, Heb. ix. 22. Deity could not die, humanity could not ſatisfy; but God and man in one perſon could do both. The *ſword* of juſtice *awoke* againſt *the ſhepherd, the man, God's fellow*, Zach. xiii. 7. By him the law was ſatisfied, the curſe removed, juſtice greatly delighted, grace glorioufly exalted, holineſs and faithfulneſs raiſed to the higheſt pitch of honour; and, in ſhort, all the divine perfections ſo united and harmonized as to give their chearful votes (if I may ſo ſay) for the ſalvation of the elect; or, in ſcripture-language, *mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each other*, Pſ. lxxxv. 10. God is *juſt* and the *juſtifier* of them *that believe in Jeſus*, Rom. iii. 26.

But, *2dly*, Almighty power is neceſſary for the redemption of the church. It was not only neceſſary, that he who undertook to redeem

redeem the church ſhould have ſomewhat to offer equivalent to the demand, that law and juſtice might be ſatisfied, and God reconciled to ſinners; but that ſinners alſo ſhould be reconciled to God. The choſen are not only by *nature children of wrath, even as others*, and thereby expoſed to eternal miſery; but they are *enemies* in their hearts, and in their lives, *by wicked works*; they are willing ſlaves to ſin and Satan: The *carnal mind* in them, as well as in the reſt of mankind, is *enmity againſt God*; the ſervice of ſin and Satan has gained the full conſent of the will and affections in their ſouls as well as others: The ſinner is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: the covenant has made proviſion for this alſo; the ſpirit engaged in the covenant, to call, quicken, renew, and ſanctify the elect people of God. The redemption of the Son makes way for the application of the ſpirit. He makes willing in the day of his power. Faith is of the operation of God; by him we believe on Chriſt to life everlaſting, and lay hold of the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus. All this takes its riſe from that "love, "which (as Dr. *Goodwin* expreſſes it) had "run under-ground from everlaſting, and "breaks up into a man's heart in effectual

" calling." The exceeding greatneſs of almighty power breaks the curſed league between the ſoul and ſin, and delivers him from captivity, to Satan, the God of this world; *the ſpirit that works in the children of diſobedience*, as it is expreſſed, *Epheſ.* ii. 2. *By grace are* we *ſaved*, ſaved from the dominion as well as the guilt of ſin. Grace gives the ſoul ſpiritual eyes to behold its miſery, and enables it to apply to the remedy. From hence then we ſee how well ordered the covenant is, and what ample proviſion is made for our guilty and helpleſs ſtate, in ſuch a way as that grace may have all the glory.

Secondly, This leads us on to the next branch of ſalvation, juſtifying righteouſneſs. This is one of the glorious fruits of redemption; for we are *juſtified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. iii. 24. Juſtification is a forenſick or law-term, and ſignifies, an acquittal, or diſcharge from ſome indictment or charge brought againſt a perſon in court; when upon trial the perſon is found not guilty of the crime charged upon him; or, if guilty, legal ſatisfaction is made, and he

is

is then pronounced righteous, and justified in a law-sense, and so fully cleared and discharged in open court. This is (if I mistake not) the general idea of justification amongst men. To apply this to our purpose; There is a charge brought by the law of God against the elect, as well as others; that they have rebelled against God their rightful sovereign and liege-lord; that they hold confederacy with sin and Satan his sworn enemies; that they have defaced the image of God, and set up the image of the Devil in their hearts; that both their inclinations and doings are diametrically opposite to his commands and injunctions: In short, that they *say to the Almighty, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Is this a false charge? are the facts brought not true? is there no proof of them? yes, proof sufficient; upon trial it appears, that the charge is just, *every mouth is stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God*; upon this the law spares not to thunder out its anathema, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. But see what grace flows from the Saviour's lips; *Lo! I come*, says the kind redeemer, on me be the guilt and the curse. *q. d.*

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He was *made a curſe for us*, ſays the apoſtle, *Gal.* iii. 13. Yea, he is ſaid to be *made ſin for us*; aſtoniſhing expreſſion! which could never have entered into the head or heart, or come out of the mouth of man or angel, had not God revealed it to us by his ſpirit, 2 *Cor.* v. 21. Let the iniquities of the elect be laid on me, ſays the Saviour, I am able to bear them; accordingly, the church, by the prophet, ſays, *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all:* does the law complain, it is diſhonoured? I will, ſays Chriſt, be ſurety for them, that it ſhall receive ſatisfaction for this: *As by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. *The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake; he will magnify the law and made it honourable*, Iſa. xlii. 21. *A body* (ſays Chriſt) *haſt thou prepared me*, Heb. x. 5. A body and a ſoul too, truly human: Chriſt was conceived and born after a miraculous manner; he did not deſcend from *Adam* after the ordinary courſe of generation, as all other men do, but was *made of a woman*, and is called *the ſeed of the woman*; ſo that he had no concern in *Adam*'s guilt and pollution; was without ſin, *holy, harmleſs, unde-*

undefiled and ſeparate from ſinners; being *that holy thing* united to and called *the Son of God*. The law never was, nor ever could be ſo honoured, as by the perfect obedience of the Son of God in our nature. He was not neceſſarily under the law, being in his higheſt nature the law-maker, and in the loweſt no law-breaker, as he came not out of *Adam*'s loyns. *He was*, ſays the apoſtle, *made under the law, to redeem*, &c. *Gal.* iv. 4, 5. already quoted. *He made peace through the blood of his croſs*, by offering himſelf *without ſpot to God*. A debt of perfect obedience, and a debt of puniſhment for tranſgreſſion, were required of us; Chriſt undertook both, and thereby freed his people from the condemnation to which they were expoſed for failing in both. On Chriſt's engagement in the covenant to become a ſurety, the law and juſtice of God turned their eyes from the elect upon him; and the expectations of both are fully anſwered by him. He died, *the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God*. In him God beholds his people all fair; even as *David deſcribeth alſo the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works*; for if *it be of works, then is it no more grace*,

otherwiſe

otherwiſe work is no more work, Rom. xi. 6. The active and paſſive obedience of Chriſt, or what he did and what he ſuffered, enter into the matter of our juſtifying righteouſneſs. He became *obedient to death, even the death of the croſs*: Tho' he was *in the form of God*, and *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, yet he *made himſelf of no reputation*, &c. *Phil.* ii. 6, 7. This righteouſneſs is reckoned, accounted, imputed for righteouſneſs, as the apoſtle largely proves, *Rom.* iv. And when the Spirit of God works faith in the heart of an elect veſſel, he is then enabled to lay hold on this righteouſneſs for his juſtification, to look unto Jeſus that he may be ſaved, and hereby comes to have an open and legal claim to it. When the Holy Spirit, in purſuance of covenant promiſes and ſettlements, comes to work faith in the heart, he uſually firſt terrifies as a ſpirit of bondage, before he comforts as a ſpirit of adoption. He makes uſe of the law to rouſe the conſcience, alarm the ſoul, and bring it to deſpair of juſtification by the deeds thereof; the purity and ſpirituality of the law, ſet in ballance againſt the impurity and carnality of the heart and life, confound the ſoul; now his eyes are open, and his heart diſcloſed; the divine

holineſs

holineſs ſtrikes his mind with an awful ſolemnity; incenſed juſtice, with its flaming ſword, ſeems brandiſhed, ready to glut itſelf upon him; and weighty vengeance appears terrible, to cruſh him into everlaſting deſtruction: Now his own fig-leaf righteouſneſs, of which he had before boaſted, falls off, and expoſes him naked to his ſhame and confuſion; he ſees in his heart nothing but guilt and pollution; and nothing his due but miſery and deſtruction; now he deprecates the divine tribunal, ſaying, *If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt mark iniquities, O Lord! who ſhall ſtand?* Pſ. cxxx. 3. *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified,* Pſ. cxliii. 2. Adored be everlaſting love and free grace; the glorious agent in the covenant does not here ſtop, but proceeds to raiſe up the ſoul thus caſt down; he opens the treaſures of the goſpel, brings forth the beſt robe, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, puts it on upon the ſoul in application; and gives faith, to apprehend and lay hold of it for his juſtification: The glories of this righteouſneſs diſplayed to faith, fill the believer with holy wonder and joy; here it ſees how a broken law is repaired; an offended God reconciled; and the divine perfections harmo-

nized. O! the glories that open themſelves ſometimes upon the ſoul thus taught of God; how is he delighted, refreſhed, comforted, and animated with holy zeal for the glory of God; burning with love to him, and a concern to honour him! "Here, ſays the ſoul, I ſee a righteouſneſs that is equal to the law; a righteouſneſs that has brought more honour to God than my ſins have diſhonour. Here my ſoul ſhall reſt; to Jeſus I will look for pardon and ſalvation; ſurely will I ſay, as the church, *Iſa.* lxi. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs,* &c." When the ſpirit of God, with light and evidence, thus ſhines in upon the ſoul, then come peace and joy in believing; *being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have now received the atonement,* Rom. v. 1, 11. Then the ſoul can glory that he has acceſs to God; now he is juſtified in the court of his own conſcience; his heart is ſprinkled, from an evil conſcience, with the blood of Chriſt; guilt flies away; *there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus,* Rom. viii. 1. This renders Chriſt precious;

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the covenant amiable, and God in all his perfections lovely in the eyes of the ſoul. O what a glorious righteouſneſs is this! a righteouſneſs that not only ſecures from condemnation, but entitles to life. The believer has *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood* of Chriſt; a *new* and *living way* is opened through the *vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh*; the ſpirit of adoption enables him to cry, *Abba, Father*; he now comes to God, as his own God in Chriſt; a God pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin; the promiſes of the covenant are now read by him with a peculiar pleaſure and ſweetneſs; *I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more*, Heb. viii. 12. *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins*, Iſa. xliii. 25. Yea, the divine ſpirit enables the ſoul to ſee, that all the proviſions of ſanctifying, renewing, and perſevering grace, belong to him; and the promiſes give kind encouragement to wait and hope for the accompliſhment of them. That faith which is *of the operation of God*, works by love; it purifies the heart; and by a ſteady looking unto Jeſus, the ſoul grows up into him, and is conformed to

him. *Beholding, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord*, it is *changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Faith depends on the Redeemer's fullneſs that it might receive, *and grace for grace*; in him the ſoul is *compleat*; and by him ſhall it be cleanſed more and more *from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* In the righteouſneſs of Chriſt the ſoul comes to the throne of grace now, and expects acceptance at the throne of judgment hereafter; through this it hopes for every ſupply of its wants; and humbly waits in the uſe of means for perfection in every grace, victory over every enemy, and, finally, glorification with Chriſt in heaven: Nor do theſe expectations, dependencies, and waitings, encourage indolence, carnality, and ſenſuality; no, *having theſe promiſes*, the ſoul is concerned, that he might be cleanſed more and more from all impurity, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. The Love of Chriſt conſtraining him, the grace of the covenant put within him, and the aſſiſtance of the ſpirit afforded him, all powerfully unite to make him holy in heart and life; holy, becauſe God is holy; holy, becauſe it is his meetneſs for the enjoyment

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of God; yea, a conſiderable part of his happineſs here, and a preparation for the full enjoyment of it above. Communion with God here will make the ſoul like him, and fill the heart with warm deſires to glorify him both in body and ſpirit, which are his; *For*, ſays the apoſtle, *ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your ſpirit, which are God's*, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. I now come,

Thirdly, To conſider the influence, the redemption, and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, have on the deſtruction of our ſpiritual enemies: *for they are confounded, for they are brought unto ſhame that ſeek my hurt.* 'Tis eaſy to obſerve, after what has been already hinted, concerning the guilt and depravity of our nature, the condemnation and curſe of the law, and the dominion of ſin and Satan, that all theſe are enemies in the way of our ſalvation; they ſeek our hurt, that is, they ſtand between God and our ſouls, and would in their own nature for ever hinder good things from coming unto us, and hinder us from the enjoyment of God. Need I deſcend to particulars here.

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1. The guilt and pollution of ſin juſtly forbid our approach to a holy and perfect God. He is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, Hab. i. 13. the threatening runs, *the ſoul that ſins ſhall die*; *the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. vi. 9. *God is angry with the wicked every day*, Pſal. vii. 11. *They which commit ſuch things* (as the law forbids) *are worthy of death*, Rom. i. 32. *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*, Rom. i. 18. *There is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked*, Iſa. lvii. 21. No unclean thing ſhall enter the gates of the new *Jeruſalem*. Theſe, and the like, ſhow the impoſſibility there is for a guilty polluted ſoul to enjoy God.

2. The law, as to the curſe and condemnation of it, is a mighty enemy to our ſalvation; and while a man lies under theſe, it is impoſſible he ſhould be ſaved. The law is indeed *holy*, the *commandment holy, juſt, and good*; but yet the fall has rendered it an enemy to us; and that ſeeks our hurt, becauſe we cannot come up to what it requires, nor will it abate in the leaſt of its demands. It is a fatal deluſion (by which I fear many are flattered to their eternal ruin) to

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ſuppoſe, that, becauſe we have loſt our power and will to obey, the law of God has loſt its force and energy to command; men have invented a new and remedial law, as they call it, by which they teach, that God will accept of ſincere though imperfect Obedience, in the ſtead of a perfect and compleat one. But, my friends, I hope you have not ſo learned Chriſt: I am ſure you were never ſo taught by your late paſtor; nor is there the leaſt foundation in the word of God for ſuch an opinion. The perfect law of God ſhews no mercy, will make no abatement or allowance for our ſinful inability. The law ſtops every mouth; its language is, *The ſoul that ſins ſhall die.* And, I truſt, many of your experiences can witneſs to the truth of it. The law takes a convinced ſinner by the throat, ſaying, *pay what thou oweſt*, pay to the utmoſt farthing, or away to priſon: it was a full conviction of this on your conſciences, in the hand of the ſpirit, that drove you to Chriſt and his perfect righteouſneſs, as your only remedy, or elſe you had never gone to him; for a man will never come to Chriſt till all other refuges fail; this is his laſt, and indeed his only true refuge: But this new law-ſcheme is invented

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to ſet Chriſt in his ſuretiſhip, obedience, and ſufferings aſide, that you might be tempted to ſubſtitute your own filthy rags (as the beſt of our righteouſneſs is) in the room of Chriſt's perfect robe. The apoſtle *Paul* was as good a workmonger before his converſion, as any of you all, and did as many good works in his own opinion, and was as ſincere in what he did as any man living. He was *alive without the law*, and thought himſelf ſafe for eternal life; but *when the commandment* came in it's ſpirituality and perfection on his conſcience, *ſin revived*, and he *died*; he likewiſe *found* that *law which was ordained to life*, by which, if a man does it, he ſhall live in it; he found, I ſay, this law to be *unto death*. *Sin*, ſays he, *taking occaſion by the commandment wrought in me, all manner of concupiſcence, and deceived me, and by it ſlew me:* inſtead of giving him an additional ground of hope, it ſlew the hope he had; inſtead of yielding him peace, it provoked ſin and luſt; *for I had not known luſt*, ſays he, *except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet:* doubtleſs he had read that command, as well as the reſt, many a time; and thought in the ſenſe of the young man in the goſpel, he had *kept* it *from his*

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youth up, carrying his view of it no farther than an external obſervance of its injunctions; but now being led into its ſpirituality and extent, the luſt of his heart is thereby drawn forth, and riſes up in oppoſition to it; as you may ſee at large, by carefully conſulting the 7th chapter of his *epiſtle* to the *Romans*. The law working in the conſcience of an unregenerate ſinner, is like a dam that oppoſes a torrent of waters, which makes them ſwell and riſe, and, if poſſible, break over, or through the reſtraint, and run with the greater rapidity. Thus have many others found in their experience, 'till they *became dead to the law by the body of Chriſt*, and *married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead, that* they *ſhould bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. vii. 4.

3. Sin and Satan are enemies to the ſoul that ſeek his hurt. Sin, not only in the guilt of it, but alſo in the power and dominion it exerciſes over the ſoul; *what concord hath Chriſt with Belial? what communion hath light with darkneſs? God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all*; man is darkneſs (*ye were ſometimes darkneſs*, Epheſ. v. 8.) and in him is no ſpiritual light at all. It is not poſſible that there can be delightful com-

munion and enjoyment between a polluted ſinner, and a holy God: *For, if we ſay we have fellowſhip with him and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth*, 1 John i. 6. This has been ſufficiently hinted already. Satan is called *the god of this world, the ſpirit that worketh in the children of diſobedience.* He is the executioner of God's wrath upon ſinners, both here and hereafter, in firſt tempting them to ſin, and then inflicting puniſhment on them for ever, for it. He is ſaid to have *the power of death*, Heb. ii. 14. And yet unregenerate ſinners are his willing ſubjects, they are *taken captive by him at his will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. They are his vaſſals, and with chearfulneſs devote themſelves to his ſervice; not indeed that they give up themſelves in a formal way to be his ſervants; few arrive to ſuch an height of wickedneſs and hardneſs in ſinning as this. But the pleaſures of ſin, which Satan tempts to the commiſſion of, delight and pleaſe the ſoul; and the cunning adverſary the Devil knows how to lay his baits to their taſte, and thereby ſerve his own ends of them, in their willing and chearful ſubjection to *the luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the eyes, and the pride of life: His ſervants ye are* (ſays the

the apoſtle) *to whom ye obey, whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs*, Rom. vi. 16. Hence ſinners are called *the children of diſobedience*, and are ſaid to be in the kingdom of Satan, and the like: Now from all theſe enemies, the redemption and righteouſneſs of Chriſt deliver his people. By him believers are redeemed from the guilt and pollution of ſin; they are *waſhed from* their *ſins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. *By him all that believe are juſtified from all things*, &c. Act. xiii. 39. *The blood of Jeſus Chriſt his ſon cleanſeth us from all ſin*, 1 John i. 7. Through him remiſſion of ſin is obtained, and an inheritance amongſt them that are ſanctified. He has *ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it*, Col. ii. 15. He has *deſtroyed* him that had *the power of death, that is, the devil*, and delivers *them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time ſubject to bondage*, Heb. ii. 14, 15. and *for this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John iii. 8. Through the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt believers are delivered from the love of ſin, and from this preſent evil world. *Who gave himſelf for our ſins*, ſays the apoſtle, *that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world*, Gal.

i. 4. He died to *purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Titus ii. 14. And though the world is full of ſnares, which are enemies to God's people, and ſeek their hurt; yet *be of good chear*, ſays Chriſt, *I have overcome the world*, John xvi. 33. Though Satan as a *roaring lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour*. Chriſt is the *lion of the tribe of Judah*, who ſecures his own from his rapacious jaws; having loved his own, he loves them to the end. His ſheep are ſafe in his hand, he gives unto them *eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of* his *hand*, John x. 28. He that *has begun the good work* in them, will perfect it to the day of the Lord; and he will never *leave* them nor *forſake* them, 'till he has performed what he has purpoſed, and fulfilled in them *all the good pleaſure of his will, and the work of faith, with power*. They ſhall be built up into Chriſt, as their head, and by him be poliſhed, refined, and perfected, 'till they come to a perfect man in Chriſt, and be preſented before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. Chriſt will ſay of them, *Behold, I and the children* which God hath *given me*. Hence then there is ground for the ſoul to

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triumph in Chriſt; yea, the body too, juſtly bears a part in the praiſe, which is the

Fourth thing to be ſpoken unto. Well might the *lips* of the *Pſalmiſt greatly rejoice*, and his *ſoul ſing* becauſe of this redemption; yea, his *tongue* alſo *talk of* the righteouſneſs of Chriſt *all the day long*; ſince hereby he was fully ſecured from all the miſchief and hurt his enemies intended him. A redeemed and juſtified ſoul, under divine and powerful influence, cannot but praiſe the Lord; his lips and tongue will dwell upon the delightful theme; he cannot forget it, much leſs ſpeak light of it; no, he will call upon his ſoul and all that is within him, to bleſs the name of his God. The bodies of the unregenerate are inſtruments of ſin; but when grace has reach'd the heart, it will ſet the inſtruments of the body on a quite different work. *As ye have yielded your members ſervants — unto iniquity: even ſo now yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs*, Rom. vi. 19. This was the bleſſed experience and frame of your dear paſtor lately deceaſed. He could not help uttering with his lips what his heart felt. You have often been witneſſes that grace dwelt upon his

his lips; out of the abundance of his heart his mouth ſpake to the praiſe of redeeming, juſtifying and victorious grace; nor could his enlarged ſoul be fully *ſatisfied*, till it awoke with the divine *likeneſs* more perfect; and therefore I am deſired to add the laſt clauſe in the 17th *Pſalm*, *I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs*. Now his ſoul is alive indeed, now he is ſatisfied, becauſe he is got to the fountain head, free from all clouds and clogs, darkneſs and imperfection of every kind, and will be employ'd in the delightful work of praiſe for ever and ever. And let me add, in the glorious morning of the reſurrection, his glorified lips and tongue will bear a glorious and eternal part in the ſame work; for Chriſt ſhall *change* our *vile bodies*, and *faſhion them like unto his glorious body*, &c. Phil. iii. 21. Nor will it be his happy lot alone, but the bleſſed portion of all the ſaints in the day of the Lord. What a numerous and a glorious throng, think you, will *the general aſſembly* and *church of the firſt-born* then be, ſhouting forth new-covenant-grace? May the Lord grant, that you and I may make up a part of that heavenly number, and be brought ſafe thro' the difficulties, temptations, and trials of life, till we *come unto mount Zion, the city of our God,*

God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, to an innumerable company of angels—to Jeſus, the mediator of the new covenant, &c.

Thus I have briefly touched on each of the things propoſed; they, each and all, deſerve greater enlargement; but your time will not allow it. I now come to make ſome improvement of the ſubject and providence. And,

1. Hence we ſee the ſpring of all true conſolation; it takes its riſe from the covenant of grace, and ſtreams down to us through a redeemer's blood. This your late honoured paſtor knew, and therefore not only made theſe glorious truths the ſubjects of his miniſtry while living; but left you my text, to ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance now he is dead. It is, doubtleſs, expected, both by the church, and auditory now gathered together, that I ſhould give ſome account of the life and death of that precious ſervant of Chriſt, who laboured in the word and doctrine here. I confeſs I am not fond of funeral-encomiums on the dead, ſince they are often ſuſpected of flattery; and have been ſometimes uſed to no better purpoſe, than (as one expreſſes it) offering

offering incenſe to the dead, and laying a ſnare for the living. However, in the attempt I now make, I truſt I ſhall have a witneſs in the conſciences of many, that I avoid any juſt imputation of this kind. I ſhall not be afraid nor aſhamed to ſay, that the *Reverend Mr. Bentley* was a faithful, zealous, and laborious miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, nouriſhed up in the words of faith and ſound doctrine. He had no contemptible ſhare of good natural parts; and however they might have been cultivated and improved, had he been indulged with a liberal education; yet the large meaſure of gifts and grace, with which he was furniſhed from above, greatly ſupplied a deficiency of this kind. He had an *unction from the Holy One* above many. His zealous and ſteady attachment to the truths of divine revelation, is worthy our imitation. The diſtinguiſhing glories of the goſpel-ſcheme were the delight of his heart. He had himſelf drank deep into the pure fountain of life, *clear as cryſtal*, that ſtreams *from the throne of God and the Lamb*; nor did he foul theſe waters of the ſanctuary with his feet. He had waded into the deep things of God, and was favoured with ſolid judgment in the myſteries of the covenant.

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The everlaſting love of God, the choice of the elect in Chriſt, the redemption of the church by his blood, the juſtification of their perſons in the beloved, effectual calling, ſaving faith, evangelical repentance, holineſs in heart and life, as the fruits of ſaving faith and evidences of it, and the perſeverance of the ſaints to the end; theſe (chiefly) were the precious ſubjects of his miniſtry; and in handling of them, he *approved* himſelf to your conſciences *in the ſight of God* to be *a workman that needed not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*, and giving honour to each of the divine perſons in the Trinity, as the alone author of ſalvation to the choſen.

Reflect, my friends, how your *hearts have burned within you*, while he has been *opening the Scriptures* in their glory; how he fed ſome of you with the *ſincere milk of the word*, as *babes in Chriſt*, that you might *grow* thereby; others with *ſtrong meat*, as *young men* and *fathers*. His preaching to many of you, was *in demonſtration of the ſpirit and power*; though you might have had *ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt*, yet had you not *many fathers*; for in Chriſt Jeſus he was the inſtrument of begetting you through the go-

ſpel. And he was as remarkable for edification as converſion: he had an aptneſs to teach above many. He was a *good houſholder*, who brought out of goſpel-treaſures *things new and old*: He had great light into Old Teſtament types and ſhadows; and knew how to apply them to New Teſtament truths and ſubſtance. As Chriſt is the life of the goſpel, ſo he was the life of his preaching; and as he loved Chriſt himſelf, ſo he aimed to ſet forth his glory, that others might love him too.

As to his converſation, you are witneſſes, and God alſo, how *holily*, and *juſtly*, and *unblameably*, he behaved himſelf amongſt you that believe. Many years have you been indulged, not only with his publick miniſtrations, but alſo with his private inſtructions. He was a *burning* and *ſhining light*; though for ſeveral years its rays were chiefly confined to you; but ſince their influence have been more diffuſive, many others beſides yourſelves have *rejoyced in his light*. The ſhort acquaintance I have had with him, rendered him peculiarly dear to me; becauſe an excellent ſpirit was found in him. His converſation was with a *ſimplicity* and *godly ſincerity*, rare to be met with in this our degenerate

nerate day. He has often lamented to me, the waverings and ſhiftings, both in preaching and converſation, for which our day is ſadly remarkable; and where he found any of his friends ſwerving from the truth, was faithful and zealous in reproving; though ſometimes with no ſmall reflection on himſelf for his pains. His fervour, both in praying and preaching, was often aſtoniſhing and refreſhing; in the one he ſeemed familiar with God, in the other with the ſouls of men. He had a peculiar aptitude in entering into the experiences of men; and knew how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary. How often have your doubts been ſolved, your objections anſwered, your joys excited, your hearts melted, and your ſouls comforted, through his Inſtrumentality? I may appeal to many here, that I have not ſtretch'd beyond ſtrict Truth in theſe things: but I believe thoſe who were beſt acquainted with his preaching and converſation, will think I have fallen very ſhort in my account. But, to draw towards the cloſe of his Life.

As valuable and uſeful as this ſervant of Chriſt was, his abode with us muſt be no longer; his work is done, he is gone to reſt;

and the places, the pulpits, the houſes, that once knew him, ſhall know him no more for ever. It was the pleaſure of the Lord to afflict him with a painful and lingering diſorder of body, which baffled the ſkill of the moſt able phyſicians. When means failed here at *London*, it was judged proper that he ſhould go to *Bath*, hoping the waters there might be bleſſed with a healing virtue. Prayer was made *without ceaſing of the church* unto God for him; and ſeveral of his brethren in the miniſtry, to whom he was dear, chearfully aſſiſted again and again in ſupplicating his recovery. But alas! neither means nor prayers could keep him from entring into the joy of his Lord. And as he has honoured Chriſt in life, Chriſt would now honour him in death. He was peculiarly favour'd with the divine preſence all his illneſs; not a cloud, as I could learn, was ſuffered to interpoſe between him and his God. His heart and tongue were full of precious promiſes; ſavoury expreſſions continually dropped from his lips; all ſignifying, that the ſame goſpel-truths he lived by, he could with chearfulneſs die by. In the Letters he ſent to you (as a church) from *Bath*, he manifeſts the tenderneſs of a loving

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and faithful ſhepherd over his flock, and the comforts of a believer and a chriſtian. I have not room to recite theſe; you, as a church, have heard them already. His prayers were for you with many tears, that you might be eſtabliſhed and comforted in the glorious truths of the goſpel you have been taught: to that end, he tells you his experience and joy in this time of diſtreſs. He breaks out, in one of his Letters, "O "bleſſed Jeſus! what! die for me! in him "I have a garment both to cover and adorn "me: this is the fountain I waſh daily in "by faith: the ſpirit opens theſe things to "my ſoul, and I find joy and peace in be-"lieving." Theſe comforts (he tells you) are not gathered from the new-fangled doctrines of the day; but from the good old doctrines our forefathers witneſſed unto, and were not aſhamed to glory in even unto death; "and I hope (ſays he) I ſhall to "death, and to all eternity glory in." He goes on, "Sad for ſouls, to think of getting "to heaven without Chriſt. I know him to "be the way, and the only way too; and "I like this way well, and will caſt my ſoul "here for eternity. O, everlaſting grace!

"O, re-

"O, redeeming love!" * And thus he goes on, like one on the borders of glory, or as if he had one foot in heaven already. But I muſt not enlarge further; I fear I have treſpaſſed upon your time and patience. However, permit me, in the

2*d* place, to addreſs myſelf to you as a church of Chriſt. *Remember* him that had lately the *rule over you*; who has *ſpoken unto you the word of God*; *whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of* his *converſation*: Remember his ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith; his holineſs in life: Remember his heavenly doctrine, and his upright walk and converſation; and let it be your concern, to *follow* thoſe *who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes*. Stand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, be ſtrong. I truſt, you have been enabled to drink too deep into the glorious fountain of goſpel-grace, to be eaſily moved away from the hope of it. We live in wavering times. The Lord keep you and me ſteady. Keep cloſe to God and one another in love; be fervent and frequent in prayer together and apart; maintain the watch and diſcipline of the church; and, I truſt, your great

* See his LETTERS at the end of the Sermon.

great head, *Zion*'s King, will, in his own time, qualify and ſend amongſt you, a paſtor after his own heart, that ſhall feed you with knowledge and underſtanding.

As to you, his dear mourning relict, I am ſenſibly affected with your caſe. I would not open the ſluices of ſorrow wider than they are; but if the Lord will, would gladly cloſe them. Shall I ſay to you, as our Lord did to the widow at *Nain*, Luke vii. 12, 13. *weep not*. I know that nature muſt have a vent; tears will be allow'd by our Lord himſelf (for *Jeſus wept*) while the heart is reſigned to his will. Yea, had Jeſus himſelf been at the grave of your dear huſband, he might have wept over him, as he did over *Lazarus*, for he is one whom he loved and loves for ever. May the comforts of the covenant which your dear yoke-fellow has ſo often opened to you, be now freſh ſprings of joy and conſolation to your ſoul. Your loſs indeed is great; you have loſt the partner of your life, who ſhared with you in comforts and croſſes; you have loſt his tender affections, his fervent prayers, his evangelical preaching, his valuable converſation and ſhining example: but this ſhould alleviate your grief, he is gone to Jeſus, which

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is *far better*; and ſhall we envy the ſaints, who are in the boſom of our Lord? Chriſt, your huſband, lives for ever; and *becauſe I live* (ſays he) *ſhall ye live alſo.* May the Lord comfort your heart, and be your guide, even unto death, and your portion for ever.

To you, his dear offspring, let me ſay, the chriſtian character of your honoured father is worthy your imitation. I truſt, through grace, you will be enabled to ſeek after the God of your father. Remember, if ever you expect to ſee his face with comfort in the great day of the Lord, you ſhould now be concerned for an experience of his grace, and to follow his example; you have been ſolemnly devoted to the Lord by your godly parent; I hope you are intereſted in that covenant, wherein God has promiſed, to be a God to his people, and their ſeed. The promiſes, I doubt not, have been often pleaded for you, may they be often pleaded by you, and evidently fulfilled in and to you, that you alſo may live for ever with Jeſus.

Shall I ſay to this aſſembly, *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* Even wicked *Balaam* deſired *to die the death of the righteous,*

that

that his laſt end might be *like his*, Num. xxiii. 10. May you and I be concerned to live the life of the righteous; live by faith on the Son of God, as the Lord our righteouſneſs, and be wrought up to a conformity to God, and a meetneſs for the enjoyment of him. You that have attended on the miniſtry of the word in this place, call to mind the warnings he gave to ſinners; how he ſet forth the miſery of a chriſtleſs and unregenerate ſtate, and tremble to think, leſt the word riſe up in judgment againſt you, and that ſervant of God who preached it, ſhould be a witneſs againſt your unbelief and impenitency in the great day of account.

LETTER I.

A Letter to the CHURCH.

BATH, *April*, 10, 1751.

Dear Brethren and Siſters,

I Wiſh you grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and from the ſeven ſpirits before the throne.

I believe your prayers to God are many for me, and your love great towards me; all which I thank you for: I am now in a ſtrange place, abſent from you all, whom I love in the Lord: I think of you, and talk of you, and with many tears pray for you; that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt would fill your ſouls, and comfort and eſtabliſh you in the great and important doctrines of the ever-bleſſed goſpel, ſo much deſpiſed by multitudes in this day; you have not been moved from them, nor, I hope, never will: let men deſpiſe them, and call them by what names they will, you have, and do find them, the power of God, unto your ſalvation; hold them faſt; the day is dark, and

will

will be darker ſtill: the everlaſting love of God to his choſen in Chriſt, and their full portion of grace and glory given them in him, and union to him, and ſecurity of their ſalvation by him, are the things of the ſpirit's revealing unto us; my ſoul and yours, have, under the miniſtry of them, been abundantly comforted and delighted: this grace, in the exaltation of all the perſons in the Godhead, I hope, has been my ſtudy and delight; and according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt, I have made it known. I wiſh my abilities had been abundantly larger, to honour Chriſt in his miniſtrations of grace. Keep together, and let not your places be empty on the Lord's-day. I doubt not, but you are often in ſpirit with me at *Bath*, and could be glad to know how it is with me, in body and ſoul, under this diſpenſation; as far as my ſtrength will admit you ſhall know, in all reſpects: as to my body, it is weak and ſkeleton-like, I look ghaſtly enough; but bad as it looks, it is the *temple of the Holy Ghoſt*; and he can repair it now if it pleaſes him; if not, when it is diſſolved and brought down by death, and worms feed upon it (though at preſent there is not much for them) it ſhall be raiſed and

beautified; *Corruption ſhall put on incorruption*, and *mortal ſhall put on immortality*: to look at myſelf, I hardly know myſelf; but, oh, bleſſed day! when this *vile body*, that ſin has made ſo, and has been the inſtrument of ſin, ſhall be *faſhioned and made like unto* Chriſt's *glorious body*: I long for it, but muſt wait the time for *the redemption of the body*; it ſhall then be employed wholly in the ſervice of God and Chriſt; no ſickneſs nor pain more; the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory* ſhall be put upon it. As to my ſoul or ſpirit, or what is the preſent diſpoſition of my mind, I will give it you: as to my ſoul, I am not to ſeek for what God hath to do for me, or wrought in me, that is of ſome years ſtanding, from the early part of my life. I have had my dark and diſtreſſing times this way, like the ſaints of old, and the preſent ones, and have ſaid, *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul*, &c. but theſe weeping and diſcouraging times have blown over, and, I could ſay, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul*, and can ſay ſo now, and call upon *all* in me to *bleſs his holy name*, becauſe he *forgiveth all mine iniquities*; and, oh! how many and great are they, for number like the ſands upon the ſea-ſhore; and for greatneſs,

like

like mountains; but ſuch a God is our God to pardon and blot out all ſins and iniquities; and he hath *healed* me of all my ſpiritual *diſeaſes*, that there is no charge in law or juſtice can fix or faſten upon me; yea, and all conſcience-guilt muſt and doth give way, and is carried off from diſtreſſing my ſoul; all this is by blood, the blood of Chriſt; here, here I ſee my freedom and diſcharge: O bleſſed Jeſus! what! die for me! in him I have both a garment to cover me and adorn me, and this is the fountain I waſh daily in by faith: the ſpirit openeth theſe things to my ſoul, and I find joy and peace in believing; Satan ſtands off, Death's ghaſtly face is made pleaſant, and the grave a perfumed bed. O that my Father would let it thus continue unto the end! The breaſts through which I am now nouriſhed, and fed, and comforted, are, what? not the new-fangled doctrines of the day, but the good old doctrines, that our fore-fathers bore witneſs unto, and were not aſhamed of, even unto death; and I hope I ſhall, to death and to all eternity, glory in. Oh! ſad for ſouls, to think of getting to heaven without Chriſt; I know him to be the way, and the only way too; and I like this way well, and

will

will caſt my ſoul here for eternity. Oh everlaſting grace! oh redeeming love! oh for more of the great applier of all this, to comfort, refreſh, and carry me through, what I am yet to paſs through, of pain, and ſickneſs, and death: thus, in brief, as to the preſent frame of my ſoul. If you would have my thoughts, as to the preſent diſpenſation of God upon me, and my family, and you the church of Chriſt, I know it is dark and afflictive; I cannot ſay much of this at preſent; as to the proſpects of getting over this painful and ſick diſorder, I ſee none at preſent; what ſudden appearances may ariſe for my help are at the Lord's command; and if he ſends his word, I ſhall be healed. I am in his hand; there is a time to plant and a time to pluck up; but if my work is not yet done, dark as things are, I ſhall go forth again in his ſervice, to finiſh what he has allotted for me; I often think how my thoughts were guided to the laſt text I ſpake to you from *John* xiv. 19. and have been ready to think as I then ſaid, ſo it will be; but Chriſt lives to take care of my family, and to help, ſupport, and comfort them; and he lives as the great head of the church, to raiſe up and ſend amongſt you,

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one that ſhall feed you with wiſdom and knowledge; we under-ſhepherds are dying creatures, but the great ſhepherd is ever the ſame: ſo, that under this providence, put all things together, his *ways* to me are *in the deep*, and his *path in the mighty waters*. Submiſſion to his will, is, what, I hope, he will help you as a church of Chriſt unto; O bleſs his name, that I find mine bowed to his will and pleaſure; let it be as ſeemeth good in his ſight: I think nothing troubles me ſo much as this, that I ſhould be called to die here; I have indeed found a chriſtian friend or two, but they are but few in this place by all accounts. If I find no relief, I ſhould long to make my end amongſt my brethren and ſiſters, and companions in Chriſt: however, ſome weeks will determine this matter, and my ſtay here; ſuch a journey as I had was enough to make a well man ſick; and I do not wonder at it, if the exerciſe and ſhaking of the journey, for the preſent, may make me ſomewhat the worſe. Thus, my brethren and ſiſters, I have ſent you this epiſtle of my love; let me be continually upon your hearts before the Lord; remember me, and my wife, and mine; I think of you continually, you are in my mind

mind day and night; I frequently dream, that I am with you and amongſt you; the Lord fill you with all joy and peace in believing; if I ſhould ſee you in the fleſh no more, I ſhall ſee you in that day, when Chriſt ſhall gather his together, his ſervants and their flocks; you are my *crown of rejoicing* now, and will be then. I have done. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all. *Amen, Amen.*

Your dear brother,

In affliction, for Chriſt,

W. BENTLEY.

LETTER

LETTER II.

A Letter to the CHURCH.

BATH, *April* 17, 1751.

My dear Brethren, and Sisters, and Children in the Lord; Grace, Mercy, and Peace be with you all.

MANY *fathers* you have not; some of you were *begotten* by one, and some by others; some of you are mine in the Lord, and to others I have been made useful to feed, nourish, build up, and establish on your most holy faith. *O, stand fast in one spirit, striving for the faith of the gospel,* holding the *mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*; I cannot, nor ever may more preach to you from the pit; but I would, by my pen, so long as I can write, *put you in remembrance,* and *stir* you up, as the apostle *Peter* speaketh, 2 *Pet.* i. 14. *knowing that shortly I must put off my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shewed me.* Moreover, I would endeavour that you may have these things in remembrance: your ministers are dying comforts;

you ſit under their miniſtration for a ſeaſon, and then they are taken from you; the Lord ſpeaketh to you by it, may you hear his voice in this diſpenſation; if you have ſet me out of place, and too highly eſteemed me, know that God will have no fleſh glory in his preſence; but if you have been careleſs, and not ſet that juſt eſtimation upon the inſtrument and means you have enjoyed, which the Lord expected at your hands, then he ſpeaketh to you by way of rebuke; the *treaſure* you know is *in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God.* We die; the Word of the Lord lives for ever; which Word I have preached to you in the glory of his perſon, grace, offices, and fullneſs; and you have been comforted hereby. Chriſt, I hope, has been the ſubject of my miniſtrations to you; I find him now to my ſoul, in all his endearing relations, a precious box of ointment; to be a finger or toe in that body, of which Chriſt is the ever living head, is infinite grace: And Oh! how ſhall we praiſe him in the height of *Zion*. If the Lord ſhould make me go forth with you in his worſhip here, I ſhall rejoice; he can do it, tho' all things ſeem to oppoſe it. That word of *David*, hath

hath and doth yield me comfort in and under this providence, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. *And the king ſaid unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it, and his habitation: but if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; here am I, let him do as ſeemeth good unto him.* So that here I am ſtayed; I long to ſee you all; my heart's deſire and prayer to the Lord for you is, that you may be a tribe preſerved for his name; he can raiſe up an under-ſhepherd for you, if I ſhould be taken away; for he lives to bear your judgment continually before the Lord under this trying diſpenſation; he is able to do more for you than you can aſk or think; cleave to him; and abide by him and one another, that is the way to know the mind of the Lord. Pray my love to the brethren that have entreated the Lord on my behalf; I am glad to hear the Lord was preſent with them; it may be eminently for your good, though the ſpecial thing aſked may not be granted; for God will be glorified in all things, whether it be by my life or death. Continue your prayers unto the Lord for me; I do, in all mine, wreſtle with the Lord for you:

And now, in the words of the great Apostle, when he took his leave of the church of Ephesus, I would bid you farewell; *Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, that is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.* My love, and my wife's, to you all. I rest,

Yours, in the service of Christ,

My Lord and yours,

W. BENTLEY.

LETTER

LETTER III.

A Letter to a FRIEND.

Barn, *April* 18, 1752.

Dear Friend,

I Have time to think, and my thoughts are sometimes upon one friend, and then upon another; and I thought a few lines to you might be acceptable, to hear of me, a weak, very weak worm indeed; I am almost brought down to *the duſt of death*; I frequently am ready to ſay with *Job*, and call the *earth*, *my ſiſter* and *brother*; the Lord, and my Lord is breaking me to pieces (as to this frame) apace; and I am often thinking of *Hezekiah*'s words, for they come up to my caſe, both as to pain and ſickneſs, which is both violent and very frequent; *Iſa.* xxxviii. 12. and yet I can bleſs his name, and ſay, that *in love to my ſoul*, he has *caſt all* mine iniquities *behind* his *back*: O Chriſt!

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my Lord, friend and elder brother (in his glorious conqueſt and victory, over ſin, Satan, death, and hell) appears glorious in my eyes; I ſee him by faith, and am helped by faith in this trying time, to ſtay and truſt upon him, and him alone; for he is my ſalvation, and in him I have all I want or can deſire. O this foundation! what ſupports it brings into the ſoul, in the views of diſſolution, death, and the grave; as indeed is my caſe. I can hardly hold my pen ſteady to write; my caſe is very dangerous, and all the means hitherto uſed fail; O ſad and weariſom nights are appointed to me, but everlaſting arms doth ſupport me; I long to ſee my dear friends once more in the fleſh, but I fear I ſhall not.

O bleſſed day, when ſaints ſhall meet never to part! a glorious morn will that be, my dear friend, when all the redeemed of the Lord, ſhall join in company and ſpirit, to ſing that new ſong; O! it makes my heart rejoice, in the thoughts of it, at times, to ſee him, and praiſe him, whom my ſoul loves; and, above all, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me. May the God of all grace, ſtill comfort, eſtabliſh, and make you meet

for

for the inheritance of the saints in light, and give you an abundant entrance into his kingdom and glory, is the desire of,

Your brother in affliction,

And distress of body,

W. BENTLEY.

FINIS.

Lately publiſhed, and ſold by GEORGE KEITH, *at* Mercers-Chapel, Cheapſide,

I. FOUR occaſional Sermons, by the late Mr. *William Bentley*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

II. A practical Diſcourſe on God's Sovereignty, by *Elihu Coles*.

III. A Defence of the Religion of Nature, and of the Chriſtian Revelation, by the late Mr. *Simon Browne*; recommended by Dr. *Harris*, as a Syſtem of the whole Controverſy with the Deiſts.

IV. The Doctrine of the Trinity, as it is contained in the Scriptures, explained and confirmed, and its Conſiſtency with the Principles of Natural Reaſon cleared, and Objections to the contrary anſwered; and the ſupreme Deity of the Son and Holy Ghoſt, and their Equality with the Father in all Divine Perfections and Glory, proved; with a full Anſwer to the chief Objections againſt the proper Godhead of theſe two Perſons; in Eighteen Sermons on that important Subject, by *James Sloſs*, M. A. To which are annexed ſeveral Letters wrote to the Author relating to the ſame Subject, together with his Anſwers.

V. Divine Breathings; or a pious Soul thirſting after Chriſt, in one hundred Meditations.

VI. The Doctrine of Juſtification by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, ſtated and maintained. The Third Edition.

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The laſt Seven by John Gill, *D. D.*

Where alſo may be had the other Works of Dr. Gill.